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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000668

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/01/2018

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN RELEASES NEC CONTAINERS, APPROVES ARMING
EMBASSY LOCAL GUARDS, BEGINS FOLLOW-UP ON ROME AGREEMENTS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 646

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 582

[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 574

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) The GOS has begun releasing long-delayed NEC containers and also approved the US Embassy's request to arm its local guard force, as long as the guards "remain inside Embassy premises," MFA U/S Mutrif Siddiq told CDA Fernandez and polchief April 30 (first containers with in Embassy hands on May 1). The National Intelligence Service (NISS) and Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) signed off on the local guard proposal, he said, and when the Embassy is ready to import the weapons it should simply submit a diplomatic note to the MFA, which will be approved "immediately" by NISS and DMI. Embassy Khartoum has been requesting this step since November 2007.

[1](#)2. (C) Siddiq also said the GOS has already begun implementing commitments made in Rome, such as providing enhanced security for WFP food convoys headed to Darfur. The GOS is committed to providing security escorts at a minimum once every 48 hours, and if possible will seek to increase this to once per day in the next few weeks as manpower issues are resolved. The GOS has added additional security staff for this purpose and has also mapped out alternative routes, according to Siddiq, which should eliminate some bottlenecks and create shortcuts. Siddiq asked for confirmation that the WFP had communicated this to the Embassy, and CDA confirmed that in fact WFP had told USAID about these arrangements on April 29. Despite taking this first step in following up on commitments made in Rome, Siddiq observed that "there is no clarity" on follow-up to other items discussed in Rome. He indicated that although Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie had attempted to return a call to SE Williamson, he was unable to reach him. Siddiq observed that Nafie and Williamson don't need to discuss all of the details, and suggested establishment of a follow-up mechanism between himself and CDA Fernandez but worried that there could be some lack of follow-up in the next few days as Siddiq travels to Oslo for the Sudan Consortium. CDA said he understood the need for a consultative mechanism was discussed in Rome and that he is ready to play this role. Siddiq also said that the Sudanese are establishing an airport office and clearing up UNAMID shipment backlogs as well - two other items discussed in Rome.

[1](#)3. (C) Siddiq then turned the conversation to some "alarming"

information the MFA had just received from the Sudanese Mission to the UN. The Sudanese Mission reportedly has received notification that it's accounts are likely to be frozen and seized on May 6 as part of the USS Cole ruling. He said the court had a list of bank accounts provided by OFAC, and that the Sudanese Mission was informed that these accounts could be frozen on May 6. CDA Fernandez thanked U/S Siddiq for providing advance notice and offered to immediately work with Washington to clarify what could be done to resolve the issue, as we did several months ago. (Note: As suggested by State/L late in the day April 30, CDA Fernandez will follow up with the MFA and ask them to encourage the Sudanese Consulate to provide its bank with an affidavit stating that the bank accounts are diplomatic. Post requests that SPG provide the same information to the Sudanese Consulate in New York. End note.). Siddiq added that to block the Embassy accounts in New York could send a "disastrous message," freezing any progress in improving relations.

14. (C) Comment: The GOS is attempting to show that it will pull out all the stops to improve relations with the US, in hopes that the US will take some reciprocal steps prior to and following SE Williamson's anticipated visit to Khartoum May 18/19. Sudanese Customs announced prominently to local media outlets April 30 that the NEC containers have been approved for release, and the NEC contractor began receiving the containers on May 1 but some local media outlets warned that "many expect Sudan to receive nothing from the Americans" for these many concessions. Embassy intends to aggressively pursue the much needed local armed guard option with the Sudanese in the next few weeks. End comment.
FERNANDEZ